Eng Poetry vol 30

ELEGIAC VERSES

TO A

YOUNG LADY,

ON THE

DEATH OF HER BROTHER;

WHO WAS SLAIN IN THE LATE ENGAGEMENT AT BOSTON.

THE AUTHOR M. M. ROBINSON.

Illius ad Tumulum fugiam supplexque sedebo
Et mea cum muto Fata querar Cinere.
Tibull.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Trifle was written ſoon after the unhappy event to which it refers; and contains the genuine dictates of ſympathetic Friendſhip, excited by the melancholy fact. Should this firſt eſſay of an early Muſe eſcape the ſeverity of cenſure, it will probably ſtimulate the Author, on a future occaſion, to ſubmit ſomething to the Public which, he flatters himſelf, may more juſtifiably invite their attention.

NOVEMBER, 1775.

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NOVEMBER, 1775.

ELEGIAC VERSES.

I.

WHILE the fond tear bedews a Brother's ſhade,
While ſilent anguiſh rends the bleeding heart,
Shall meek-ey'd Sympathy with-hold her aid?
Or ſtrive ſome genial ſuccour to impart?

II.

Ah pleaſing Hope! to gild Affliction's gloom;
In all its ſorrows to accept a ſhare,
T' aſſuage Misfortune's yet untimely doom,
And chace Deſpondence from the brow of Care!

III.

Come then, bleſt Monitreſs---inſpire the Muſe,
Direct her genuine numbers how to flow,
And, while the taſk of Friendſhip ſhe purſues,
Teach her to calm the riſing plaints of Woe.

IV.

Teach the fair mourner with thy lenient pow'r
To ſooth Affection's tributary grief,
To cheriſh Reaſon each revolving hour,
And from her ſacred precepts---ſnatch relief.

V.

So ſhall thy influence, with ſpontaneous charms,
Like dawning Hope revive the drooping mind,
And, while returning Sorrow it diſarms,
Teach weeping Virtue how to be reſign'd.

VI.

What tho' ſtern Death, whoſe arbitrary call
The greateſt monarchs o'er the globe obey,
Has robb'd Affection with a Brother's fall,
And ſummon'd Merit to the realms of day:

VII.

Yet know, FIDELIA, Wiſdom's hallow'd page
Proves it the common lot of man below:
The young---the grave---the giddy---and the ſage---
Alike muſt yield to Fate's deciſive blow.

VIII.

Tho' blooming Youth may promiſe many years,
Tho' roſy Health may crown the flatt'ring time,
Yet ſoon---ah, ſoon---relentleſs Death appears,
And nips the infant bud in earlieſt prime!

IX.

Still more precarious are Life's pleaſing views,
When War's tumultuous broils pervade the land;
When Glory's call the eager Youth purſues,
To fix his fate at her inviting ſtand.

X.

There, when aſſembled in the tented field,
Fir'd with Ambition for recorded fame,
Can genuine Honor tamely ſtoop to yield
The brighteſt ſanction of a ſoldier's name?

XI.

And tho' unjuſt the ſelf-convicting cauſe
That lately crimſon'd Boſton's carnag'd plain,
Yet Duty, ceding to ſuperior laws,
Conceal'd in Loyalty---the ſpreading ſtain.---

XII.

---Ah, fatal tendency of ill-tim'd Pow'r,
When lawleſs ſtates engender'd civil woes,
When Harmony forſook her tranquil bow'r,
And War with ſavage prevalence aroſe!

XIII.

Should haughty nations fire BRITANNIA's rage,
And ſpurn her claim to Freedom's gen'ral laws,
With earneſt zeal her heroes might engage,
And fall with glory---in their country's cauſe.

XIV.

But can ſhe ſee what diſcord has prevail'd,
What horrors mark'd that inauſpicious day
When parent ſtates their offspring's peace aſſail'd,
To force allegiance to deſpotic ſway?

XV.

Can ſhe behold a land---with plenty crown'd,
Unmov'd at Pity's ſelf-approving ſigh?
Can ſhe behold her darling vot'ries round,
Mourning the wrongs of injur'd Liberty?

XVI.

No!---Let the hireling cringe for mean applauſe,
And with ſoft flattery ſoothe the royal ear---
BRITANNIA ſhudders at th' inglorious cauſe,
And ſhares with Freedom its lamenting tear.---

XVII.

Forgive, FIDELIA, theſe digreſſive lays;---
They breathe the dictates of an honeſt heart,
---A heart that ſcorns to proffer venal praiſe,
Or ſully Truth---with Adulation's art.

XVIII.

XVIII.

That precious Liberty---beſtow'd by Heav'n,
Still animates her ſons in Freedom's cauſe,
And thoſe to whom the god-like precept's giv'n,
May plead the ſtrength of Nature's earlieſt laws.

XIX.

---Be ſuch the ſanction of an humble Bard,
Untaught the depths of Science to explore;
Whoſe numbers, while they flow from pure regard,
Seek not on Fame's expanded wings to ſoar.

XX.

Will then FIDELIA---ſooth'd with Friendſhip's balm,
Believe its eſſay cordially ſincere,
Let genial Sympathy her boſom calm,
And for a moment check the falling tear?

XXI.

So ſhall its influence ſoften riſing grief,
Aſſuage each tender, woe-expreſſive ſigh,
Yield grateful Innocence ſome kind relief,
And wipe the ſtarting drop from Sorrow's eye.

XXII.

But ſhould the well-meant tribute Friendſhip pays,
Inſtead of calming, wound with recent pain;
Should, while ſhe pleads in unambitious lays,
Fair Sympathy exert her pow'rs in vain;

XXIII.

Will not Religion's eloquence prevail?
From her mild precepts will not comfort beam?
---They teach us, ſublunary Hope is frail,
And human Happineſs---a tranſient dream.

XXIV.

XXIV.

They teach the virtuous, philoſophic mind
To bear, unruffled, every frown of Fate;
In each viciſſitude to be reſign'd,
And hail Contentment in the lowlieſt ſtate.

XXV.

So may we learn, unaw'd by riſing Fear,
Thro' ſtormy ſeas of adverſe cares to roam;
No doubt at length our little bark to ſteer,
Exempt from perils, to its deſtin'd home.

XXVI.

Virtue will flouriſh Heav'n's peculiar care;
And tho' Affliction caſt her ſable gloom,
'Twere impious to anticipate Deſpair,
Or mourn untimely our imperfect doom.

XXVII.

When ſorrows croud---when woes unnumber'd ſpring,
---'Tis Providence approves the trial giv'n;
Then meek Humility her aid ſhould bring,
And reconcile the troubled mind to Heav'n.

XXVIII.

But when returning Hope (like morning rays,
That greet with welcome light the gladden'd earth)
A ſcene of dawning happineſs diſplays,
And gives Content its joy-inſpiring birth;

XXIX.

No more let Grief provoke the ſilent tear,
No longer Miſery its hard fate deplore,
The ſtrain of Gratitude ſhould flow ſincere,
And bright'ning views Felicity reſtore.

XXX.

Then whilſt, with Reaſon's philoſophic rules,
Religion's more exalted pow'rs unite,
Let man, inſtructed in their ſapient ſchools,
Reſign'd, admit—WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.

FINIS.

XXX.

Then wail, with Reason's philosophic rules,

Religion's more exalted purer voice,

Lucretius, inflamed in their Epicure School,

Rail'd, admir--WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.

FINIS.